

HARD CORE

December

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HARD CORE

December, 1970

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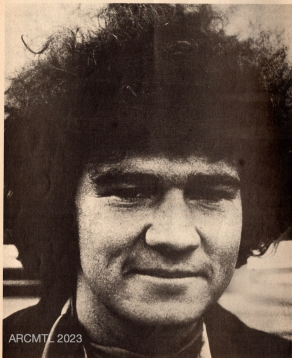
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ROBERT CHARLEBOIS



ARCMTL 2023

an interview

Opened the year with a grand spectacle at Place des Arts; worked on another with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra; went across Canada on the Festival Express with Joplin, Band, Grateful Dead, et al; Grand Prix du Festival de Sopot (Poland) for Ordinaire; travels to California, Moncton and Rome; plays before 50,000 at Expo. . .

Charlebois lives on the fifth floor of an apartment building running down a slope of the mountain. In the elevator, you push five and descend one floor.

Charlebois apologizes; no pot, no booze. Refers to three in the afternoon as the morning. One more apology: his head is full of scotch from the night before. The conversation. . .

In Moncton it was a t.v. show, not really my thing, not really interesting. In Roma I'm supposed to sing with an Italian female singer and make an lp in Italian. I received a few translations, unfortunately not very good, but I can't really judge because I can't speak Italian. I did some Latin in school but I'm not familiar with the Italian language. But it's easy because they don't have a few dozen X's and W's following each other like in the Polish language.

There's a flavour in your songs, an unmistakable Quebec atmosphere, do you think they'll understand it there?

Do you mean Moncton or Roma? I've never been to Roma. . . but Moncton is a very sad scene, even sadder than Poland. I don't know why. The people don't like the French there, you know, and the kind of language they talk, it's not French nor English. I couldn't understand them, the children, so it's a very desperate thing, they must be very lonesome, I couldn't live there, it's a small town, it's not a village, it's a small town. . . I just took the plane, did the show, and I went to hear a female rock group at the Brunswick Hotel and that's all I did, I got drunk there and then I came back. I was about 10 hours in Moncton.

How did it compare with Calgary?

Oh, it's not the same thing. Winnipeg and Calgary are cowboy towns, they are funny towns but in Moncton you have the straight square English and you have the Indians and it's very fragile, you know. Like if I would have worn my Indian headdress in Moncton, they probably would've scalped me or something. They have a complex, it's like the Negroes in the French Antilles. When they make a festival they play guitars and trumpets but in their mind they associate the drums and percussion with manual work, like cutting the cane, so they don't do percussions. . .

Do you know my Indian headdress, it's not a gadget. A French critic said it was a gadget but it's a very important move, I think nobody did that in an international way before me, you know. We're all Indians and it's the main problem of America now. . . Why? Because there are people who have an interest in starting a war between the blacks and the whites and the Indians are probably the ones. . . they're in the middle and they can arrange it or they can make it worse, but they have to make a very big move, this year.

Why do you think a critic would call your headdress a gimmick?

I think I used too many gadgets in certain periods of my career, but I believe in a visual impact, you know, but maybe my music could be strong enough to go without gadgets, but it's not a gadget, it's one of the nicest objects I've seen in my life. It's a very beautiful, great object.

What's the difference between you and people like Jean-Pierre Ferland and Gilles Vigneault?

Well, I'm ten years younger. I may be more American than they are. They are French, Gilles Vigneault is the one I respect the most of all those singers, he's a great poet, great musician. Ferland, well. . . he's a nice guy, he's got talent, but we're not of the same generation. I've been to the United States and I think he never went to the U.S., I don't think he's really interested by knowing what's happening there, he prefers Europe. . . it's a big chance that we have the Americans near us, for all the good things. Their music is the greatest on earth, I guess. If we wouldn't have them we would be as late as the French or the Polish are.

Why is there such a difference between the line that the Minister of Cultural Affairs speaks and you?

Well, he's a purist, he has a French mind too, and to him all that I do is killing the great. . . les grandes espoules de sa vie. Someone comes out and makes all the errors we're not supposed to make in school, all that on the same record, and I'm his kind of "anti-culture", his enemy I guess. I disturbed many minds in Quebec and they don't like that.

But you're not particularly nationalistic.

No, I'm not a nationalist. Nationalism is worse than racism. It's for the people who have a very low brain. I think. But I went for that shit when I was very young and very fresh. I went with the RIN and was believing the indépendance de Québec. Well, I'm independent, everybody can take his independence right now. . . Compared to the other points in the word we're free people. When you go to Poland and you see what's happening to socialism you say "Wow, Canada is a paradise". It's in your brain, if you feel like a slave, you're a slave. If you feel like you're independent, you're just independent, in the way you walk.

Weren't you once invited to sing for a Union National convention?

Yes, I was in Toronto and Laravense (Guy) phoned me and asked "Do you want to sing for the students



Do not color this beige.

at the University of Quebec", so I came there, it was during the period elections, and on the stage, everywhere in the room, there were big posters of Jean-Guy Cardinal. So when I went on stage all the photographers wanted it to look like "Charlebois tells you to vote Cardinal". So I stopped the show, I said "I don't want to do politics", not because it was Cardinal, but for Trudeau and Levesque I wouldn't do it either. They wouldn't ask me, because it's the wrong way of proceeding. Trudeau, he's too cool to ask me. I have my ideas and I sing them, I'm freedom....

You went down to the States to see Frank Zappa... How was that?

Very short. One hour, and I think he told me everything in an hour. He was very "rude". He told me that I would reach more people if I sang in Latin than in French.... He's a very serious man, you know, he's not an acid-head or he doesn't smoke. He works 20 hours a day making dots.

How did you like working with the symphony?

I prefer my January experience with the brass and the string that I chose myself. With the symphonic orchestra it's not a real buzz because it's too heavy, too square. They have all their music, their jealousies. The psychology of the symphonic orchestra is important.... Some of the musicians were

positively against it, like mean cracks like "You won't bother to call someone to tune a piano for a show like this". I should've taken a rhythm section. Eight violins don't have half the volume of an electric bass.

Where is the poetry in your music? Is it in the words, the music, or the sound?

It's in the sound. It's not built for the eye, it's a poetry built for the ears. It stands up as an object only as a sound.... The ideas are important, the gags—the things that make people laugh—are very important because I have a great sense of humour for the people who listen to my records, you know. Since one year I didn't write anything because I've received so many good scripts, I have about 2000 here, but it blocks me. They're good poems, good songs, very funny, but it's not me. If I continue doing the other stuff I'm gonna receive more and more and there will be no end to it, and I won't be a writer anymore.

What about the difference between recording and performing?

Well, it's two very different bags. Unfortunately I never had any good records. The sound is always wrong, there's always something wrong. Like *Ordre*, it's not bad, but its pochete is so ugly. Somebody is always trying to kill me. I don't know if it's

RFB



ARCMFL 2033



Photo by Malcolm Stone

on purpose but I feel like I'm alone, you know.

How long are you tied up with Gamma?

Still one year. They made me sign for four years during a studio session. I didn't read it, greatest gift of my life. He (Daniel Lazare) didn't miss me.

There's no way you can get out of it?

He's a lawyer—I could but I don't want to go and lose my time in court. It's a bad trip all the way. What can I do? I signed it...he's with the law. I can do nothing.

Do you have any long-term goals? What would you like to see?

Oh, I would like to see Florence very much, all the treasures of the earth, and I'd like to make a good record for Christmas. I mean a really good record, a perfect record, with no shit on it, take my time, go in the studio and do it again as long as it's not perfect.

And then what?

And then...And then along came Jones (laughter)...The cinema, I have some offers for movies; it interests me but not more than that. I'm going to Mexico for the winter to write. You can't do everything; I've been so busy since two years and a half doing social things and building up shows—everywhere, political bag, musical bag, theatre. Now I'm gonna take it more easy and try to see where I am and try to write new songs again.

Are you going to record the album here?

I don't think it would be really better if I record it in London. It depends on the people with who you

work, if it clicks with a good technician. You could be in Rigau if you have an 8 or 16 track machine. I don't need more than that; that's a gadget when you're making a record on 72 tracks. You lose your goal, eh, the goal is a song when you make a record, the melody, the idea, the atmosphere.

What about getting into the American market?

Yes, I have no choice, I have to make a few tunes in English because that's where everything is happening and I would be stupid to just continue my role, living near 200 million people and having the talent to communicate with them, and not doing it. I wouldn't be glad at the end of my life.



MONTREAL: WHY HIGH ART NEVER GOT OFF

by ARTHUR BARDQ

■ "Where's Montreal exactly?" David Glas, New York artist on being invited to stop over and visit with a local artist on route between his outposts in Toronto and Halifax.

Vancouver, Regina, Toronto, Halifax, all exceed Montreal in importance as Canadian art centers. Indeed, as an art center, as opposed to an artist's residence, Montreal hardly exists at all. Why? How does it happen that Canada's major urban concentration fails so signally to fulfill its cultural role?

In order to examine the reasons for this failure it might be helpful to first define those characteristic institutions which transform an urban agglomerate into a cultural center.

These institutions and structures which serve art as either information centers and/or channels of liaison with the community at large are of two sorts: those specifically devoted to the arts, such as museums, galleries, art schools, art periodicals, and artist's assemblies (which may be professional organizations or taverns) and those which incorporate the arts as special sectors within a broader spectrum of concerns such as state schools, governmental agencies, and the mass media.

Now as to museums. Montreal is possessed of no museum that can be taken seriously by anyone knowledgeable acquainted with the art field. The Fine Arts Museum, which betrayed a certain dynamism and concern for contemporary art under the aegis of Edward Turner, has retreated to a policy of minimum involvement under the directorship of David Carrier.

The museum's virtual bankruptcy is advanced as an excuse for the limited activities it has undertaken. Perhaps I find it more likely that that bankruptcy exists as a result of its policies. The museum simply has not involved the community to a degree that will command its support. It has, for example, never had a French-Canadian as director despite the special sensitivities (indeed, near-racist sensitivities) of this community. A museum cannot be run as a private heli and expect to command communal loyalties.

So little of that which is vital and important in art has in the past been shown at the museum that even the public attending the museum has remained devoid of any context within which the reality of contemporary local art production might be appreciated. These policies so alienated the artists that they demanded of the provincial government an institution which would be

responsive to their needs. The sop that was thrown them, alas, was the Musée d'art presque contemporain.

Because of its present poverty, the museum has been forced to mount a low cost show like Certe Janssen's "Spectrotrisme," something it might have done all along rather than importing high-priced and useless prestige items like the Rembrandt show. While a major concern of the museum must be the conservation and exhibition of historical works of merit, its hoarding fifth rate junk which might be unloaded to raise desperately needed revenue leads one to wonder why it has not done so. The answer is obvious: all that garbage was donated by Very Important People whose financial goodwill must be retained.

The museum is housed in a hopeless mausoleum which might happily serve as the site of a magnificent municipal gambling casino but which is absurd and sturdily costly to maintain as a museum.

The revenues the museum derives from private and public funds are easily equivalent to those drawn by the Vancouver art gallery whose activities under Tony Emory and Dorothy Shadoff have made that museum world famous. Of course, our museum costs more to run, if that labored limp can be called a run, and if one may say "our" for an institution in which we are denied any share in policymaking.

The "Contemporary" museum, on the other hand, furnishes an object lesson in the dangers of provincial administration. It is underfunded, ineptly administered and necessarily committed to the staid cultural policies of the provincial government whose major lens seems to be the proclamation of legitimacy of some mythical French cultural heritage. The French culture propagated by this myth is that of state officialdom which is universally opposed to whatever vitality may exist within a culture. Neither Jean Genet or Baudouin-Cohen made their visits to Montreal under the auspices of the Franco-Quebec cultural exchange.

To ascertain who are the actual inheritors of French culture it is sufficient to visit any Montreal bookstore and compare the prices of the French and English language editions of any important French author. Levi-Strauss for example. Or perhaps one may recall that the French-culture-prestige-symbol Leger, whose works the museum exhibited complete with a mimeographed biography informing us that his mother was a "femme-sainte", as a real living artist taught in the States, where they were interested in his artistic wisdom if somewhat insensitive to the questionnal epiphanies of his maternal descent.

THE GROUND

The Breinlin center which went a long way last season toward taking up the slack occasioned by our museum's default has had their exhibition budget cut back this year. Their exhibitions however are in the capable hands of Zoe Notkin, whose energy and enthusiasm has overcome past obstacles.

The commercial galleries. What can one say? While only two or three can be given points for trying, they can hardly be taken to task for selling crap when only crap will sell. A gallery may only sustain a certain number of non-selling shows a year and remain in business. There is simply not enough of an interested buying public in Montreal to support the serious productions of local artists, even if we restrict our consideration to those art activities which are productive of saleable objects.

Free schools remain unaffiliated with the state educational system. The museum school has come a long way since the days when it functioned as a sort of girls finishing school, but it is severely restricted by being required to function solely by means of the funding provided by its tuition fees. Reviewing last year's student show "La Presse's" critic asked what purpose a school of this sort served. The answer should have been obvious. It provides employment for artists and keeps at least a portion of art education out of the hands of bureaucrats.

The local artist's organizations are so woefully inept that they have not begun to realize their professional or political possibilities. For example, one may cite that the remissions of federal sales taxes on the purchase of sculptor's materials was obtained from the government, not by any pressures mounted locally, but by lobbying carried out by Gerard Teppele of the Toronto branch of the E.A.T. No efforts have been made by other artists' groups to obtain similar consideration. After a scathing series of articles in *La Presse* by Normand Theriault, detailing how Quebec artists were being shafted by the cultural ministry, the call for confrontation at the ministry was able to assemble only about thirty artists. Certain artists have admitted that the sole reason for belonging to these organizations is that they would otherwise be required to pay a commercial tax on their studios.

The E.A.T. organization, which makes available to artists the technological resources of industry, has branches in New York, Los Angeles and Toronto. When efforts were made to establish a similar group here, Francophone elements freaked out at the danger posed by this "American cultural ogre" and outmaneuvered it to establish a truly Quebec product called "Creation". Something may ultimately result from this if technology lasts long enough. The organization is comprised of people like Jean Pierre Belaudin, a very sensitive photographer whose instincts are really directed toward getting away with a healthy minimum of technology. Gosselin, an artist who has no idea of what technology means in artistic terms, and Marcelle Perron, whose decoration of the Champ de Mars metro station amply demonstrates the dangers of technological tools in the hands of inept artists.

As to art periodicals, there are but two to consider. (The third, the cultural ministry's *Culture Vivant*, merits no consideration.) *The Des Arts*, edited by the charming Mrs. Paradis, tries. It is resolutely and admirably bilingual but is simply too uneven in quality to gain entry to the more advanced circles of international publications and too much of a pastiche to inform local tastes. *Articane*, which in recent years has become a journal of international importance has, perhaps unavoidably, given somewhat restricted coverage to the Montreal scene. There is a desperate shortage of informed criticism in Canada which becomes even more desperate when translation problems prevent cross-over. Translation problems in

an officially bi-lingual country? Yes, Emily.

The public demand for art education, however defined, has increased enormously. While both the art C.E.G.E.P., Vieux Montreal, and Sir George Williams turn away two thirds of their applicants for lack of facilities, handsomely endowed McGill has nothing that can properly be called an art department.

At the Université du Québec, the old Beaux Arts continues to give its dedicated students the provincial academics training that few of them may survive to become creative artists. To compound its difficulties, it reeks of provincial politics.

The brightest spot in the schooling picture has been Sir George and the major reason for that luminescence is that it has had as chairman of its department the remarkable Alfred Pinsky. Unfortunately, he finally wearied of the constant petty battles that must be sustained against Quebec myopia and has retired as department head to be replaced by the somewhat lacklustre Edwin Cook, whose talents as administrator are unquestionable. Three young artists, Jolin, Peters and Hayward, were not rehired this year. Jolin, Peters and Hayward will teach at the museum school. Kiyooka is not rehiring from Vancouver and the Core program, a vital non-structured seminar which engaged the most talented students has been dropped due to lack of student interest. The rumours crediting all these changes to a rightist backlash are really unfounded. They are merely due to the usual institutionalized Quebec war of attrition against broader vision and freedom, with its victory marked by the collapse to mediocrity.

There are rays of hope. Despite the structure of higher education, certain individuals who actually have some knowledge of their subject have found their way into the educational system. In addition to very fine instructors like Peter London and Gary Coward who remain at Sir George, Molinari will be teaching there this year. Jean Lorie is teaching film at the Atlantic C.E.G.E.P. using Metz as a text. There are even some artists who have so skillfully concealed their competence as to have garnered degrees.

The mass media which might have been expected to expose the Montreal public to activities and developments in the arts have failed miserably to do so. Television, which is the one medium that might serve to establish art as a reality for the public, has either neglected art entirely or bungled its presentation so badly that it is pointless to discuss it in any detail.

Le Devoir, the pretentiously moralistic journal which aspires to command an intellectual audience, for a considerable time did not even bother to discuss the plastic arts. The establishment press in English treats cultural matters on such a low intellectual level and with such a hack tone mentality that getting anything of value past their blatant policy of catering to their advertising departments is seemingly hopeless. This does not apply to pop culture which is better understood by Rodriguez than by the "clercs" of the French press. Things are better at *La Presse* where Normand Theriault is given a weekly page to discuss whatever he deems of importance. This policy results in the best criticism being published in any continental paper with which I am acquainted.

Which brings us to the zero element in our group: the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. After ninety per cent of its budget has been spent on administration, the remainder is dispersed among various cultural organizations and in direct grants to artists. Since the ministry is a government bureau, it is better able to deal with structures which are comprehensible to a bureaucracy. Large sums therefore go to those large organizations, symphony orchestras, theatres, museums, which make sense to the bureaucrats

mini-mind. Since no one in the Ministry seemingly is qualified to decide just how its erratic grant system is to be organized, kindergarten games like the provincial Courts are arranged to get money to the artists. As to just what culture means, and how to go about providing for its vitality (they seemingly possess not a clue).

Given the mental climate of Quebec, it seems a very valuable move to turn the ministry over to a psychiatrist until one passes to consider that psychiatrists have been in the habit of functioning as a priesthood serving the establishment.

What threat of insanity runs through this bleak prospectus? Why have other areas of Canada moved so quickly ahead of Montreal in developing their artists' situation? How account for the pervasive cultural anomie of Quebec? (It may be shit but it's our shit and if we lose it we may be left with nothing.)

The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that Quebec, unlike the rest of Canada, has not resolved its colonial situation or unbundled itself of the reactive patterns and social structures which perpetuate that situation.

The English colonial overlords of Quebec administered by the *roi negre* blancs of Quebec City is still very much the daily reality of life in the province. It is this lingering colonialism which serves to explain so many of the characteristics which differentiate Quebec from other areas of North America. One may recall the hysteria of the anti P.Q. editorial which appeared in the Star during the last election. It was voice of the English compound in India faced with a native uprising.

The favorite device of the colonial office for justifying its retention of power has been the maintenance of law and order among the various ethnic groups under its control. That these groups had no difficulty getting along together before the foreigner's arrival was frequently overlooked. To that end, England, on taking over Italy's calmly integrated African colonies after the second world war, immediately imported thousands of Indians, and to add belated ten years later there was a racial problem with England selfless attempting to mediate. When race is unresolvable as a colonial tool, religion is the next best bet. Witness Belfast.

Despite the temptation toward further historical digression, let me confine this to those features of English colonialism germane to Quebec.

The Enlightenment never had a chance of penetrating the Church's control of Quebec's French educational system. The entente between Church and English economic domination remained, despite repeated revolutionary attempts, too powerful a coalition to destroy. The characteristic method of maintaining power in Quebec has remained not an attempt, however fraudulent, to convince the populace, but quite simply the "locking up" of power.

And this method has been remarkably effective. Any dynamism within the society has been contained. Any exposure to ideas or customs from without has been blocked or neutralized by a carefully nurtured relegation to "foreignness". The French have been conditioned to fear assimilation as they would perdition. English, a marvelously fluid semiotic, has been equated with some horridous anglo-saxon culture that presumably includes such figures as Norman Mailer, Eldridge Cleaver and Frank Zappa. The distinction between migration & assimilation has been carefully left unarticulated.

On the English side the threat has been loss of control, the loosening of ties, irrevocable blockage, the danger of experiencing smother or excitement. To this end they have managed to achieve a dullness of response that verges on the pathological. The "Fred Bassett" strip published in the Star is a perfect cultural expression of



Profiles of Montreal I: Nick Auf der Maur

that dead little world. Manners which are merely the functional formulae of a culture's epicenter tend to become the totality of experience at its hinges where they either alter naturally or take the road through caricature to dissolution.

Anglo-Canadian artists beginning to divest themselves of their insular perceptual restrictions naturally selected the vast landscape as a pictorial theme both because it avoided a public expression of sensual intimacy and because it defined the major difference between their experience and that of the upright little island which remained the mental home of the colonials.

The Franco-Canadian culture which did not suffer from the same philistine attitudes was doomed by isolation to a continuing provincialism only rarely overcome by instances of intuitive genius like that of Coles Leduc.

The statement of a North American reality manifests itself more clearly each day in Canadian art despite anti-American prejudices which foolishly identify a heterogeneous continental experience as being the monopolistic preserve of one group. The States merely throw off its colonial status long before Canada began to outgrow hers and, despite a similar wage dominated power structure, has drawn upon diverse cultural traditions with admirable eclecticism.

Montreal has had all the ethnic cultural diversity required to do the same but has been prevented from accomplishing this by its lingering colonialism. Cities have functioned as cultural centers because of their being cultural clearing houses. The inhabitants of Montreal tend to think of themselves not as Montrealsers but as members of some exclusive ethnic group within the city.

The colonial power lock explains as well the peculiar lack of a Canadian art market relative to the wealth of the city. The implied justification for a bourgeoisie possessing all the goodies of their society is a carry-over of the aristocratic assumption that they embody or occupy the best of their society. The only alteration required for this assumption is that this possession has been attained by achievement rather than birthright.

This has led to the continuation of high or court art serving as a status symbol for bourgeois society.

A colonial power group however feels no need for such justification. They are in control period. The only cultural effort they attempt is toward status within their peer group which is composed of other power blocs elsewhere. "See, we have a museum/opera/symphony ballet too!"

Only those individuals or organisations within that power group whose prosperity depends in large part on the entire society, of which they are masters, may attempt certain token gestures of good will. Publishers of newspapers or periodicals for example may publicly display support for local art productions while spending much larger sums on the purchase of status art for their private possession. Foreign corporations which have obtained concessions within the province may be induced to openly collect local art. It serves as a highly visible well-nigh inapproachable form of public relations.

This has resulted in a very small job for local artists who desperately continue to scrounge for crumbs. Anyone attempting to unlock the power concentrated in these blocs or their service groups is met with firm rebuff and will gradually wear themselves out in the effort. There is no greater apathy to be found among artists anywhere than in Montreal. Borduas exhausted himself in a lifelong battle against this social system. Corioles describes Pellier's return from Paris in terms of his having brought "fresh energy" back. Artists as different as Nesbitt, who moved to New York, and Riopke, who returned to Vancouver, used exactly the same phrase to describe why they had abandoned Montreal. "...because now I can devote my energies to my art".

What then are the measures that may be taken to improve the situation for art in Montreal? It is an absolute prerequisite for any effective activity that it be based not upon the inherited myths but upon the contemporary realities.

To accomplish anything at all, the narrow sectarianism that has characterised all the structures bred by colonialism must be abandoned. The narrowly racist and philistine attitudes which characterise the Montreal English establishment no longer are representative of the rest of the country. Nor do they hold for a great portion of the rest of the country. Nor do they hold for a great portion of the younger generation of the society itself. The English and French youth speaking both have as their reference the popular culture diffused by North America's mass media.

The sense of community and emotional wealth of Francophone Quebec has been made intelligible to anglophone youth by Charlesex. The Canadianisation process has rendered the provincial French aping of European French mores as anachronistic as that of anglophone colonialists. As the enormous advances made in the quality of French education become more readily available, the remnants of colonial-bred patronage will decrease, along with that ego insecurity and resentment which characterise subject peoples.

Were the artists to form broader based organisations they might much more effectively lobby for programs that are of advantage to all. Instead of petitioning the government for aid, as they would a royal governor, it might be demanded of the ministry that it represent the interests of the artists as citizens. Rather than spending money playing footsie with France, the government might do something about distributing Quebec's art abroad, as well as within the province and across Canada. Information and documentation are certainly within the capability and domain of the Cultural Ministry. Publications and artists' materials of all sorts are scandalously higher in

price here than they are across the frontier. Since shipping cannot account for the differential, governmental legislation or group-buying might improve that situation. Vancouver artists have had a media center made available to all of them by a Canada council grant. Were Montrealers able to cooperate, the same might be obtained for this city.

Much of art now and even more of future art activity is not product oriented, so that the public for art may be involved. To the degree that the existing institutions are not amenable to catering to the activities of Montreal artists they may be bypassed or alternate structures created.

Marketable art products ultimately must compete in quality with those produced elsewhere and to this end the level of local production must be raised. It is vitally necessary that Montreal artists as well as the public be informed as to developments in art. Exhibitions of important art must be brought into Montreal.

Theoretical considerations and many others that might be listed are merely minimal requirements necessary to correct a disastrous situation. However, since our more serious art has been so divorced from the overall social structure, it may fruitfully employ its alienation as an opportunity for discovering fresh approaches, as well as applying those radical innovations being experimented with elsewhere. The recent conference in the Bahamas which discussed methods of facilitating social change was initiated by Montrealers. We might undertake a number of other activities which our situation renders especially important. A more workable definition of culture than the current foggy notions might well be invaluable. We also might well employ the specialised talents of singular individuals here to open fruitful new avenues of inquiry. Nowhere that I know of has there as yet been established a study of plastic linguistics. Art has not as yet been nationally examined as a semiotic system and, with men like Jean-Pierre Roy and Mario Banger here, Montreal is especially well equipped to do so.

The real key to progress for the arts here is simply to define the past as being over.

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20
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NOVEMBER 1948



ARCMTL 2023

"TO BEG I AM ASHAMED"

Sept. 27

Oh man wan let me tell
 u a couple tales of
 happened today now
 there I was corner a
 Broadway an Brancille
 nite by the Black Cat
 Restaurant with my
 thumb out for a RIDE
 to the spiritualist meet-
 ing down at B'way & Ma
 when a big ECONOLINE
 pulls up on the side
 door opens up by a guy

on the floor with just
 a few teeth (his mouth
 is disappearing in a Vee
 into his face from his
 teeth going) an he sez
 "I'm from Trunna"
 and pt. of his life story
 is he got burned the
 nite before so he's got no
 skin now but it's all OK
 cuz he's goin back to TO
 soon ... we all get out at
 Cambie and i start walk-
 ing down the alley

between B'way an Tenth
 it's real quiet Sunday PM
 some around still - nite
 down to the spirit place
 which is held in the Moose
 Hall - Loyal Order of the
 Moose Chapter 888 and
 a small room 112 - tells
 the address on Broadway.
 the thing has already started
 I always go late to miss the
 sermon its boring + just
 come in time to sing hymns
 and for spirit messages

now inside #112 is one big
 room filled with institutional
 chairs - everybody is old
 whites and lite portels for
 the ladies and black for the
 gents - there is a neon
 moose head hanging from
 the ceiling part of the
 Loyal Moose Order notwithstanding
 we sing some hymns + then
 clairvoyance by people
 upfront who can see spirits
 behind those in audience
 (O brother in the last row
 I'd like to come to you I
 am in the vibration of
 your loving wife who

passed over...) & everybody
is happy not worried about
passing over or out even
an one claiming it fills
me 'young man u R lost
in a ship on the sea of life
and cant find an anchor
Remember a full vessel
is no good if it has no
anchor and yore wisdom
will be even greater if
u have an anchor' &
its meeting is over every
body shake their hands an
saying Hello how r u? &
as I am cutting a guy
told about 60 comes up

seem hrs ago picking
at the vegetables with a
knife - it takes her 2 hours
to do what takes L an hr
5 mins - the kitchen is
so small Nina falls it
up just by buzzing from
the sink to the stove an
making noise giving off
bad vibes - she gets
mad at me for not putting
the soap balls in the
plastic seashell in the
bathroom - an L. looks
like a big Angora KAT
with teased up hair
from a Troy Donahue movie

+ slaps a \$1 bill in my hand over my objections that I have seen silver he see its cool and not to worry + then talking to an old guy with a beard who tells me if u dont have a place to stay its ok for u to stay in this old trailer i have & not using but i have a place so I say 'Thats buddy' & dontout to hitch home 5 miles in 3 rides .. at home Nina (Lorri's mother) is still in the kitchen as when i left

they have 2 KATZ Harry
and KITTBY 1000-where is
Nina's favorite (cat has
so pretty) want say
much more now

C U sometime
4th Pal,
Franky



Is The Black Hand A New Rock Group?

Fiction by HERBERT ARONOFF

The coffee rattled in the cups and the Arab street-urchin waiter in his orange balloon pants wasn't doing much better.

"Dey all here?" mumbled the fat man in the corner, the fattest of several sloppy fat men all huddled in the same corner looking like they were all wearing the same shiny black suit.

Was this an audition to meet the Mills Brothers? At the midnight hour? In mid-town Montreal? But the fattest of the fat men had a bad cold I knew, because he was waving a stiffened handkerchief and talking through his nose. He would never make it as lead singer. Although as some kind of sleazy royalty, he wasn't half bad.

"Dey all here?" he wanted to know and his attendants the Schmatta Man, the Stripper Booker, the Schoolteacher and the Boxer all nodded in perfect syncope, trying to move their heads as little as possible, afraid to look too enthusiastic.

So much for their side: tough, mean, city and power-mad. In a long, black limousine that sped through the thick, wet night, they had dragged us to this command performance before the fattest of the fat men.

"Dis dem?" His red-rimmed eyes cranked open a bit more. "I thought they was seven?"

Which brings me to our side. The Singer, The Sax, The Voice, The Jock, The Tripper, The Big Apple, and me. A celestial seven if ever there was one. Just a bunch of beautiful guys who got our heads together and decided to help promote a pop festival and make life groovy for a few days and a few thousand people.

We were gentle folk with no money and little understanding of the workings of the business world. All we wanted was three days of music, peace and love. And for no pay, we were now sitting in plastic Arab splendour shaking and sweating, listening to the fattest of the fat men, with his bad cold, shiny suit, stiffened handkerchief and sinister sidekicks.

"Where the others?"

The Voice, The Jock and The Big Apple were missing. We explained that it really didn't matter since we were the majority. And they got right down to business. The Schoolteacher took the lead with a highly-colored explanation about how we were the ringleaders in some plot to put on a pop festival. (As he speaks, I noticed that the Boxer was going through my bag. A trick? I couldn't believe it! I certainly wasn't carrying a gun and we had smoked all the dope. Maybe a tape recorder?)

By this time the Schoolteacher had finished his gory story detailing the wicked promotion schemes

we had dreamed up that would practically guarantee the festival's failure and he was chortling gleefully after mentioning that it was costing almost half a million.

We chortled too—a little. But then it wasn't our money.

"How much ya gonna make?" the fattest of the fat men wanted to know.

"A million dollars," one of us managed to squeak out.

And the fatties all laughed and patted each other on their shiny black suit. (Quite a sound, that. Pudgy hands patting shiny suits.)

Then they explained that such things were very unhealthy business ventures, hardly calculated to make one a good living and that they were best forgotten. Besides, as the Schoolteacher was quick to point out, chances seemed very slim that we would ever get a government permit.

Could all this really be happening? Was this a stored nightmare or were we really being muscled out of the pop festival business? It certainly was a shock!

But not really a surprise. There had been subtle signs if one knew enough: Sherlock Holmes and could recognize the clues. Like the stories that some papers and stations carried saying we were not having the festival, that no groups were signed. Stuff like that.

And then there was the time we made a deal with some burly character called The Toe who promised to deliver us a permit to hold the show. He never made it to the appointment.

Stuff like that.

So we were shocked but not surprised. And it was almost funny, sitting there across from the fattest of the fat men having even the power to say "yes" or "no".

They asked us if, after all these persuasive arguments of theirs whether we still thought it was a good idea to have a big press party we were planning.

We all said no.

And there was no press conference. We took a holiday. The Singer, the Sax, and me—and people thought we had gone for a swim with cement shoes. But it was just a holiday, to get away from the vacuum left by our no-go pop show. But while we were gone, the man with the money for our festival decided that he would persevere after all, so he called his own press conference. There, he told the world about threats on his life and ugly happenings but insisted that he would fight it all and win.

When we heard this, we rushed back to home base ready to fight once more.

It was no use. The fat men had been right all along.

The only thing the press conference accomplished was to arouse the defenders of the public safety. In all their glory and shining brass, they came down on the scene like Tennyson on an anapest, even chauffeur-ing us around town at one point in their eagerness to calm troubled waters.

We all signed statements lying to the tooth about everything that ever happened—just like we were supposed to—and the case was quickly and quietly closed.

The fat man—the Schmatah Man, the Stripper Booker, the Schoolteacher, the Boxer, and the fat-test of them all—they all went about their business. The police went about theirs. The permit people went about theirs.

And I suffered in silence, knowing that it would be unhealthy ever to breathe a word of the truth to anyone. Besides, it's the kind of story no one would ever believe—especially since, if it were true, I would never dare write it.

But it really doesn't make a bad outline for a short story, or a play, or a magazine article, does it?

By the way, there was a pop festival after all. It wasn't ours, of course and it wasn't exactly three days of music, peace and love, I'm really glad it wasn't ours. I wonder if it was theirs?

"Forgive them, Godfather, for they know not what they do."—Ed.



ARCMTL 2023

by JUAN RODRIGUEZ

What's this? The Canadiens in fifth place?! It was all so sudden. Here they were, going through a season plagued with injuries to practically all their players, in third place, but only three, four, five points away from first — the Canadiens, Stanley Cup champions (emblematic of world pro hockey supremacy), coasting in third — all they had to do was win three, four games in a row, everyone expected it, everyone waited for it to happen, and, bango, goal!, they're first once again and that's where they'd remain for the rest of the season. But instead of winning those three or four games, they lost them, and it's a strong league this year, and here come Detroit and Chicago, who've been floundering for the past few seasons, here they come, strong, healthy, roaring past Canadiens like there was no tomorrow.

The Canadiens haven't finished out of the playoffs (lower than fourth place) since the forties! Two decades! Now they're struggling, just like the other teams have struggled, guess they're playing like an ordinary team for

God's sake. Of course, it's the injuries. In other years they've had them to one, maybe two key players at a time and there's always been somebody else to take over. The Flying Frenchman has had scores of unsung heroes, just warming the bench, so to speak, until a star got injured and, poe, they'd suddenly catch fire. But this season everyone's been out. Richard, for instance, having a really good season, playing as well as anyone in the league, a real workhorse out there, he's in Boston and he gets hit on the ankle by a puck, Montreal's behind 1-0 at this point, but Richard plays on, scores a goal, sets up another, and Canadiens win but Richard's out for six weeks with a broken ankle. Christian Bouché, showing signs of being another Mickey Redmond, shoulder separation. Lapierre, Gosselin out. Ferguson, their policeman, their key goal scorer (Ferguson's taken over from Gosselin or Richard or Lemaire in scoring key goals: he gets them off his foot, elbow, shoulder, hands, or tipped stick — but he gets them just the same, and they all count, he's always there, in the crease, giving the opposition nightmares nightmares, 20 goals last season), well Ferguson's going through the season in misery. He gets into a fight,

JEAN BELIVEAU and the decline of the Montreal Canadiens.

breaks a finger, gets into another one and is suspended for 3 games, then 6 games, breaks a cheekbone, he can't seem to put five games together without something bad happening. You don't lose a man like Ferguson all season long without something bad happening!

And now there's these gigantic headlines in the sports section of the *Montreal Star* after the Canadiens have snapped a four-game losing streak with a clutch 5-3 win over N.Y. Rangers (who are also having their problems): **CANADIENS' SERGE SAVARD BREAKS LEG.** Savard, the only player in the league who can play like Bobby Orr when he wants to, off to a slow start this season, but finally playing like the Savard of last year's playoffs, indicating that he's ready to take over as team leader. He's made a great play on Rangers' Vic Hadfield, checked him cleanly from behind, saved a sure goal Hadfield goes down, Savard goes down, and, *spectator's leg smashes against the goal post.* That's it. Everyone knows what's happened. Savard's squirming with pain on the ice, teammates cluster around but there's nothing they can do and they've all got those black-hurt, useless expressions on their faces. Everyone's thinking: How can we win now that Savard's out? In the middle of the third period. (Click him, colourman on the telecasts, gets a report from the Forum medical department and announces that it appears as if Savard has a "serious leg injury"). He says it just like that, but you feel like saying "Aw c'mon Dick, who are you kidding?" He's out for the season: don't even attempt to soften the blow. . . .

They've taken Savard out on a stretcher and we see on our screens team captain Beliveau, one of the greatest players who has ever played in this league, lending a feeble hand. He looks terrible.

That, too, is a big part of Canadiens' troubles this year. Beliveau has been playing loose. Sure he's been injured, and he's played with an injury (and Beliveau can never get away with it, never has, never will), but he's 38, old, and his legs and his chest just seem to have given out on him this year. He's played about two or three full, good games this year, games where on his every shift he's looked ready to play. But recently, after his usual slow-but-steady start, he hasn't caught on like we all expect Beliveau to. He plays a shift, or half a shift, and sort of staggers off the ice, looking sick and winded and yellow. He sits on the bench like he's about to fall asleep. In past years, he's always come on strong in the second half of the season, he'd be the best centreman in the entire league in the second half, he'd pick the club up, score the key goals and lead Les Habitants to victory. This year, it's just not happening. Beliveau is struggling (it's a sad, sad sight to see this giant man literally pushing his legs to move) and so the Canadiens are struggling.

...

"Probably nobody's sense of good conduct is innate, but his comes about as close to that as possible. He learned how to behave when he was young, and it shows in everything he does."

—Hugh Hood, *Strength Down Centre*, The Jean Beliveau Story

After being a hockey sensation for something like twenty years, somebody has written a book about Jean Beliveau. Or, more precisely, someone has been allowed to write a book. Beliveau is a beautiful player but he's a cruddy public man. The book comes out in 1970 because he probably has one year left on the ice and how is the

time to make all those years pay off in endorsements and, on a smaller scale (for posterity's sake), a chronicle of his career.

So the launching is at the Windsor Hotel — not the Queen E or some sportsman's meeting place. No, it's the Windsor Hotel because it's a symbol of prestige and respectability in Montreal and that's what Jean Beliveau stands for.

Now, the book is different, too. For one thing, it has been written by a writer, not a sports hack, but a honest-to-goodness writer who writes about things other than sports. Hugh Hood has a respectable Canadian reputation. He's not a conservative, but he's not a radical either. Just fully in the Canadian tradition. He lives in Montreal, has published about fifty short stories, and a couple of novels, and has had stuff published in other countries, too. He might win the Governor General's Award someday.

Yet, Jean — as Hugh Hood calls him — seems slightly reluctant. He doesn't tell Hood all that much about his life and times. He only adds the detail that the newspapers do not have room to print. Jean isn't taking any chances with Hugh. After all, you never know what Hugh might turn out to be. (Hugh is wearing his prematurely graying hair in something that resembles the pre-Battle tower haircut worn by one of the Three Stooges. Sort of the retarded, super-exaggerated British schoolboy look. Hugh wears this writer's turtleneck sweater — frankly, he does look weird, but Jean is keeping it all in at the Windsor. You don't catch him staring. Still, he doesn't get too close.)

So there is something a little, well, uptight about this event at the Windsor. A book on Jean Beliveau written by a guy who doesn't walk the sports beat, a guy who writes Canadian fiction (articles too) and admires Big Jean a helluva lot.

Big Jean is an institution. He has set himself apart from things, from the everyday world, not quite in an arrogant way, not in a prickly, "superior" sense, either, but perhaps it's a bit of both, plus something else, something very aloof and pigmistic and awe-inspiring. No one really seems to know what it is — but they do know that it gives Big Jean an aura no other sports personality possesses.

I've been a Jean Beliveau fan ever since I can remember. That must have been the 1955-57 season, or perhaps it was the one before, when the Canadiens, the *Flying Frenchmen*, Les Habitants, were starting their dynasty. Why, they had a grip on the Stanley Cup, they had a hold on hockey, they played a different game than anyone else, chrisi, they had to change the goddamn rules for the Canadiens. (This was the rule concerning penalties. A man goes off for two minutes and the Canadiens put on what sportscaster Danny Gallivan used to refer to as their "vaunted" power-play. Maurice "The Rocket" Richard, Jean Beliveau, Dickie Moore — or Bert Olinstead — Bernard "Boom Boom" Geoffrion — the hardest shot in hockey — and Doug Harvey — the league's greatest defenseman and quite a playmaker. Against such a combination, the short-handed team could get loughed not only for one goal, but maybe for two or three during that two-minute penalty. It was something fierce. So they changed the rule; after the first goal, the short-handed team's player automatically returns to the ice.)

With the Rocket heading into the twilight of his years (he was still an exciting player, mind you), the focus shifted to Jean Beliveau, or Le Gros Dick as they called him. You couldn't help but notice him and, young and new to the game as I was, I fell for him. I remember spotting an

article about him in a 1957 issue of *Look* magazine. Here he was — a Canadian, a French-Canadian, a hockey player (remember that hockey then ranked a very poor fifth after baseball, football, basketball and boxing in U.S.A. spectator sports) — in the super-clear colour pages of *Look* magazine. The magazine talked of him being the newest sensation in hockey, that his doctors felt he had a good ten years left in hockey, but it was his style — on and off the ice — that attracted you. He wasn't one of those firebrand players — like Rocket Richard or Bobby Hull or even Bobby Orr (who is both a firebrand and a perfect player). No, Big Jean was the big guy who skated down the ice with long graceful strides, he wasn't fast but you couldn't stop him, he was like a big plate out there on the ice, just gliding in. He stickhandled beautifully, nothing frenetic, a few deft space moves and opposing players would be thrown off easily. He'd glide in there, and he'd go straight in, when the opportunity arose, and take the goalie right out of his pants and tap the puck into the open net (slow motion films of Beliveau taking everyone in sight are practically definitions of how the game was meant to be played), or he'd lay a perfectly timed pass in front of a team-mate, a pass so precise that it would take into account the position of the team-mate at the moment the pass was being made, the speed of the teammate meeting the puck, and where the team-mate would shoot. Beliveau was a classic hockey player; he made the game look easy. In fact, the only complaint against him throughout his career was that he didn't try hard enough. But Beliveau has the best points-per-game average in all of hockey and after 15 seasons in the big league Beliveau's vital stats go like this:

GAMES	GOALS	ASSISTS	POINTS	PENMIN
992	463	601	1064	976

Plus he has posted a further 73 goals and 81 assists in 142 playoff games, a great money player! He won the Hart Trophy, awarded to the most valuable player on a team, in the 1955-56 season, and then, as if to indicate his continuing consistency, he won it again eight years later. A truly great player, the finest centre ever to play the game.

He's a classically graceful player on the ice and he carries this image off the rink, too. He's not like Gordie Howe, the Detroit Red Wing who plays perfect hockey year in year out but off the ice speaks just like a Saskatchewan native transplanted in Detroit, Michigan. Howe tries to be as graceful as he is on the ice but he doesn't quite make it. With Beliveau it's a different story. His English is not thoroughly fluent but there's something distinguished, regal, about it. He's sparing with his speech but he's correct, never uses a colloquial phrase, there's nothing slick about the way he talks. He'll use clichés but they always seem to be at least one cut above the norm. When interviewed on television Jean Beliveau comes across as reserved, polite, extremely modest, proud, knowledgeable, cautious, friendly enough.

A model man, yet you get the feeling that he's a difficult man to know intimately. He never lets on! He knows more than he says. He knows what to say to whom and he never oversteps his self-imposed limits.

There's this element of austerity about him: He towers over the province of Quebec. He's the English-Canadian's idea of what a French-Canadian should be like. He exudes quality, yes, that is it, quality. Perhaps the only sports figure in the whole goddam country who is above it all but in it all the same. Beliveau would rather say nothing than give a nod to something he doesn't approve of. This has made him an untouchable, and, naturally, one of the

most wanted men in the country. Beliveau is the only French-Canadian who is big in Toronto! Beliveau could run for political office, he could even lead a party to power and win, not because of a flamboyant, crusading charisma, and not because of some reactionary streak, but strictly on account of his quality. His quiet, modest aloofness.

But Big Jean, throughout his eighteen seasons, has never been identified with anything commercial, save his interest in Molson Greenerys (legend has it that when he was still playing senior hockey in Quebec City and was being courted by Canadians, he told the Molson family, after touring one of their beer plants, how to up its production and profits), he holds a position of managerial importance in the company, and except for the odd Vacher cake bus placard. It was before the start of 55-70 that Beliveau decided to cash in on his career. He got himself a business manager, Gerry Patterson (who also manages Rusty Staub, known affectionately as Le Grand Orange — in deference to his wavy red patch of hair — of the Montreal Expos), and he started advertising products. He spent the entire summer doing ads for Pure-Pak, a packaging firm specialising in cardboard milk cartons, a sweater company, Sun Life Insurance, and American Motors. A television commercial shows Big Jean telling Lorne 'Gump' Worsley, goalie for the Habs, about the merits of the Rambler Ambassador. At the end of the ad Beliveau drives away, muttering "Haven't I seen that guy before?"

So when Beliveau returned to training camp in September, he was out of shape. Not such a serious offense when you consider that most hockey players are out of shape from doing nothing all summer long. But Beliveau was out of shape because he was exhausted. Selling had taken its toll. He was a wreck and he never fully recovered until the tail-end of the season, but by then it was too late. The papers called it an "unidentified ailment" and you could see it right away on your TV screen: plain as day — Jean wasn't skating with ease, he laboured, he'd play half shifts....

But let's get back to the Windsor. Now, the Windsor is not just any hotel, it, like the Ritz, like Big Jean himself, is an institution and a symbol. The doormen do not look like average Joes with uniforms on, they look like a specific breed of people — doormen!

The launching is held in La Loire. Invitations have been sent out to most press sporting luminaries on the scene, both French and English: an invitation has even been sent out to the literary editor of the Montreal Star. At the door, representatives from the publishers (or from somewhere) sitting at a table are handing out identification stickers and checking to see that no one gets in who isn't supposed to. These reps — pale, pink, almost pudgy, youngish or middle-aged ladies — go about their work with awe-struck diligence.

It's a wine and cheese party and when I think of wine and cheese parties I think of literary groups (or small groups) who can't afford a big catering service or who just think it's the right thing to do — wine and cheese, real classical, simple, away from rampant commercialism (but people who think like this are usually envious of wealth anyway, so it's the same thing). But this is no ordinary wine and cheese party. I've never seen so much cheese, all kinds, huge slabs of cheddar, Canadian, Swiss, camembert, Boursault, lots of bread, crackers, toasted sticks, and wine, lots of wine, red wine, white wine, wine bottles just bathing in buckets of ice water, yours not even for the asking. Naturally, the large circular wine



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and cheese table is a centre of attention, it serves as a garnishment for the press fill-in.

Jean Beliveau is standing strategically near the bar, planted there, ready to offer a handshake and a few words to any member of the press that struts by. They all do throughout the evening, each waiting his turn, each knowing precisely at which moment Jean will be free for him. Because of this, there is only a handful of people surrounding him at any given time. But every five minutes, everytime you look, the group of reporters has changed. Nobody flogs Jean for himself — there is a strange casual ethic at work here.

He stands tall — all six feet three inches of him — and he looks taller in that dark blue suit, white shirt and dark blue tie. Notice, it's not black, it's blue, conservative and careful, but well-cut, it fits like a glove but with plenty, not too much mind you, to spare. He looks very healthy. He has a handsome face, almost aristocratic, certainly not blandly handsome. But it's difficult to catch any fixed expression on his face, it doesn't show any marks of pain and joy or any real personality. He looks at you straight in the eye and his eyes are deep, deep, deep and if you catch yourself and just look at him, you're startled by the fact that he's not really looking at anything, like the picture on the cover of the book, Beliveau skating with a puck on a plain white background, his eyes point towards you from the cover, but you look closely and the eyes become huge and round and looking at absolutely... nothing.

He smiles at you, a mild, non-committal sincere-enough smile that you're somehow thankful for anyhow because he's not uptight and he's not really phony, just slightly out of this world, that's all.

The literary editor of the *Montreal Star*, John Richmond, tweedy, thick mustache, British academic, looks up at Beliveau and after handshakes and introductions, asks him, "Do you think this is a good book *Montreal* Beliveau?"

Beliveau is almost caught. It's an unexpected question. He doesn't want to say it's a good book because he himself might not think it's good (there's this strange distance between Big Jean and author Hood). But the book is different. It's not the ordinary run-of-the-mill sports book, and Beliveau seems quite aware of this, and pleased with the fact. So Beliveau starts explaining to Richmond that it depends on how you look at the book, you've got to take into account what the author was trying to do (says literary expert Beliveau), and the tone of his voice and the expression on his face is almost but not quite, asking for tolerance and understanding and broadmindedness. Let us widen our horizons. But there is something about the expression that almost, but not quite, indicates he is unhappy with "Strength Down Centre, the Jean Beliveau Story", that maybe he should have gone with a less ambitious writer, that maybe a simple, adequately written hockey book would have gotten more of the real Beliveau on paper than this Hood book which tries, tries hard, perhaps too hard, yet has some limits, doesn't quite get there. Jean speaks to Richmond with patience, he is not intimidated by him, but there's still a sign of slight (barely detectable) defensiveness, and when Richmond leaves there is a small sign of relief on Big Jean's face.

Throughout La Loire, assembled guests are milling around. Sportswriters and personalities and hangers on all trading gossip. There's the Big Jim Bay, the young, hefty postcolonist of CFCF-TV, who is just finding himself in the position of a celebrity and enjoying every moment of it. It's a big thrill for Big Jim lately, they've been calling him

Pat Jim on tv, very informal casual stuff) to be seen at such a gathering, not only to meet Jean Beliveau, but to actually hob-nob with colleagues and competitors.

Jacques Beaudouin passes through. Jacques, famous Quebec hockey columnist who switched from the *Montréal Star* after years there to the fledgling *Journal de Montréal* (created during a newspaper and going ever since), used to be a practice goalkeeper with the Canadians in the good old fifties. In fact, if the Canadians ran short of goalies on a road trip, they'd know Jacques would come down from his seat in the press box and don the tricolor. Jacques was very fat in those days but observers say that he was remarkably agile in the nets. A colourful figure, he knew everyone by heart and meant it, too. Now he looks really sick, ill. A lot of the weight has been lost but he still hasn't and it's baggy and floppy on him. And, for some reason, there's a large white bandage on his cheek (is light? nicked with a stick in hockey practice?).

Elmer Ferguson, the dear of Montreal sportswriters, formerly of the old *Herald* (best sports pictures in town — it was a tabloid), now of the *Star* (which absorbed the *Herald*), hunched, white-haired, pink, immaculate, and eighty-five (85).

Standing to a side is Claude Ruel, coach of the Canadians, who, in his first year with the club, guided them to a Stanley Cup victory (thanks, in large part, to an overtime goal by Beliveau against Boston that put them into the finals). This year he's having problems with the team and this has given rise to the speculation that it was perhaps the team that led Claude Ruel to victory. Ruel is an enigma. Injured playing junior hockey, he turned to coaching and developed a reputation in the Canadian organization as one of their most astute men, despite his youth. Claude is 32, younger than Beliveau, Provost, Richard (who were all on that great '56 team) whom he coaches, and short and pudgy (fat) and wears a crew cut and has a face like a box, with a birth mark on a cheek. He's not an attractive figure in the sense that Hector "Toe" Blake, his predecessor, winningest coach in hockey history, and himself a great left-winger with the Habs in the 30's and 40's, was. Blake never looked satisfied, even with the best teams the game has ever produced, he could sometimes look downright disgusted and pulled his wide-brimmed hat further down over his brow and sneer at referees. Ruel could do all of these things but he'd only look worried (and scared and that's not supposed to be done in a city like Montreal, so used to winners over the years).

Wasting, that's what Sam Pollock, general manager of the Canadians, has been used to. It's number one on his mind: a short, round man with a face like an old potato and white hairiness on the top of his head and a toupe near the front. But you don't make fun of Sammy, a Jew in the WASP establishment. He looks strange standing there in team pictures or at conferences with Molson Bros., Westmont, so bland and determined. You know what Sammy is there for. The guy has hockey sense. You can sometimes see him in Snowdon, the Jewish shopping area in Montreal's affluent Westend, near Westmont and Hampstead, rich towns in themselves, doing the shopping. Short, stabby, but don't fool with him, he's shrewd, perhaps — everyone knows it — the shrewdest man in all of pro hockey. His deals in summer hockey meetings have been described as Arceneous. But that's what Sammy Pollock is all about; without him the Canadian empire would be on shaky foundations.

Finally we see Senator Hartland Molson, a senior Mol-



Canada Wide photo



Belliveau as player and politician.



ARND BRONKHORST

son, pen-stripe suit, neat black mustache, in his middle age he has handed over the reins to his son David Molson, who is young, urbane, handsomely bland, plays a little hockey himself, great family man, has a rink in his back yard and works out with the kids. Dave has taken over as the most powerful hockey man in Canada. (Maybe Dave is here, but I can't see him.) Anyway, Hartland Molson is chatting with passersby. He's polite and stiff. And ten, twenty yards away Claude Ruel, the coach, is looking glumly ahead. He's here because someone told him to be here.

At last, the official launching. Someone asks Jean to come up to the front of the room, where a lecture has been set up near a table piled with copies of "Strength Dews Comme, the Jean Beliveau Story". Hugh Hood has explained to the press that this is no ordinary sports book (Jean is no ordinary sports hero, hah, hah), that he considers the drive for excellence in sports just as important, though greatly overlooked, as the drive for excellence in the arts, that the implications of Beliveau's style are worth noting (he mentions something about the ancient Greeks). A speech is made by somebody from Prestige-Hall, the publisher, in English and French (the book comes out simultaneously in both languages; there is an equal number of copies of both here this evening). Then Jean says a few words of thanks to the publishers, to you ladies and gentlemen for helping him in his career, and, of course, to Hugh Hood, who has put a lot of "effort" into the writing of this book. A typical Beliveau speech. He could be talking about Easter Seals, or presenting some knights of Pythias award, or selling a car—the same considered, sincere, tones, his Frenchman, distinguished, proper, his English charming, neo-clownish, like a diplomat. After that, Hood is allowed to make a speech, an afterthought, the author himself. Hood, too, is bilingual (he teaches at the Université de Montréal), but no one seems to take much interest in what he's saying. He speaks and people are half-listening, a little buzz of chatter starts to rev up. He's quickly finished, this little man with the funny hair and face and glasses, and he leaves the rostrum without too many people noticing him.

Books are handed out (Beliveau's daughter, who is about 12 or 13, blooming, with her white turtleneck and mini-skirt and her blonde hair, helps distribute books with a smile) and Beliveau stands at the lectern to sign autographs. A line quickly forms and I rush with my copy to take a place.

Now, I've made up my mind beforehand to tell Big Jean exactly what I think of him. He's a hero, a great hero of my life. No other personality has so captured my attention for so long a period of time. He is the link that binds my life together (maybe I remember nothing about 1967-68 other than Jean in the playoffs against Boston, seeing those great playoff pictures in the Herald, including one of Jean's wife in hospital with their new-born). Of course, it's sentimental, and I've been thinking of a way to get it just right, all week long (this has been on my mind, something to say to Le Gros Ball. Finally, it's this: "Mister Beliveau," I thought of "Jean" but, no, keep polite, I told myself—he must get sick of perfect strangers calling him "Jean"). "I've been a great admirer of yours since I was a kid, and I'd just like to say that if I could write half as well as one player I'd be a happy guy." My God, was I really going to say that? Yes, I said to myself steadily, because that is the way you feel.

I shuffled along in line. People didn't just hold their las of the Beliveau book—they clutched them. Pens were ready, everyone on the alert. A real thrill, meeting

the Big Pella, as he is known in English TV. Middleageds of all types crowded around. Plenty of pushing and nudging here. "You don't remember me..." was the standard opener by English-speaking sportsmen, some of whom hang around the Montreal Athletic Association and who've Guy Bibeau's Christmas Nuts. They're The Best Nuts In The World. "You don't remember me" and the thing is that Jean makes no pretense at remembering. He just looks at you, his eyes big and round, that mild smile, the ease... it doesn't matter whether he remembers or not because he'll give them a hearing anyway. "Yes?" he says cautiously, and he prompts you to give him the details of your long-lost encounter with Big Jean and then he'll say, with the same mildly interested expression on his face, "Yes", an affirmation, and it makes you glad and happy.

Finally, I'm up there next to Jean Beliveau, my hero. I'm about as tall as he is, but he definitely is looking down on me, not condescending, it's just a fact, looking down on people is just a fact.

I went off, introduce myself and my position at the Montreal Star, rock writer. He doesn't bat an eyelash. He meets all walks of life. He doesn't care who I am or what I do, he knows how to handle it all. He smiles and says "yes?"

"MISTER BELIVEAU, I've been a fan of—" Suddenly, I'm looking at nothing, for he has turned to acknowledge the presence of another admirer, smiling the same smile, very natural movements, he turns and goes from face to face and it's not quite as technical as clockwork, it's more rhythmic, more balanced, there's slightness there, serenity.

There's a pause of about 7 seconds while Jean chats to maybe the MAAA or some service group or perhaps a French equivalent, they all sound alike. Then he's back again and I'm about to resume my little blurt when he says politely "Excuse me."

EXCUSE ME—the words hang in the air as if they were suspended, like the lights that illuminate the ice, from the tip of the Montreal Forum. It amazes me—Jean is staring at me in his usual opaque manner—this politeness is unnatural, it's not real, it's out of this world. Here I am, rock writer, long-hair, no-after-shave—public personalities, particularly sports types, usually forgo any manners or politeness when dealing with long-hairs. Sure, they'll talk to you, but only in the most besides-the-point manner possible. Sports and long-hairs, they don't mix, except in a campy Tiny Tim way. (Derek Sanderson, Joe Menneth—yeah, they're comers, at night, but Big Jean? He doesn't even wear sideburns yet he manages to look right on top of things.) He looks at me with the same look on his face that he's had all evening, he hasn't finished once. He's so secure—not complacent—that he does... not... care.

I regain my composure; he gives me a friendly look (yet he doesn't give any sign of identifying with anyone).

"Jean, I've been a fan of yours since I was a kid, and all I can say is that if I could write half as well as you play hockey then I'd be a happy guy."

"Well, thank you"—he's not embarrassed—"but things are not going so well this season."

"Aw, wait until the playoffs."

"Well, I don't know..." and he shakes his head sadly, and a bit of emotion comes through, sadness, he knows it, the Canadians don't going to make it this year, they just don't have it, and Jean knows, he's been with this team for eighteen years, he knows, everyone else in this room is frantic with wine and cheese and the Windsor and the doormen and the sportswriters and management and "You don't remember me" and he knows.

Of course, they didn't make it. It was close, awful close, the closest playoff race in the history of the league, five teams gunning for first place. The Flying Frenchmen were in there all the way. They even had a chase for first; they went on a ten-game undefeated streak, that helped a lot. Ferguson scoring, Hasek making great moves, young Peter Mahovlich was creating a sensation, and even with Sward out of the picture, J.C. Tremblay, who Hasek played well all season long, has suddenly caught fire and is up to his playoff form of last year (J.C. only plays great—and I mean great—when money is on the line), and, lo and behold, Jean Beliveau is starting to play hockey again. He's skating free and easy again, making beautiful moves, beautiful Beliveau moves, and he's scoring. In fact, most of his season total of 19 goals and 30 assists comes during this last two month apurt. The Flying Frenchmen head into the final week of the schedule in fourth place, two points ahead of the Rangers, who only a month ago looked as if they were in a pinch for first, now they're in a slump and lodged in fifth and the Habs are coming on strong. Still, the Habs have the tougher games: they play Boston at home on Wednesday night and then a home-and-home series against Chicago on the weekend. The two top teams it's a tough test, and Wednesday is the key, if they can do that, they're just about assured of a playoff spot. And they win against Boston, a resounding 6-2 triumph, they make mincemeat out of Boston and it seems that now Montreal is the team to beat. The Rangers keep pace. On Saturday, Montreal is behind 4-0 against the Hawks before Ferguson tallies in the final frame to make it final score Chicago 4 Montreal 1. But the Rangers lose—a big break—and now the Canadiens are assured of at least a tie for fourth place during the season. So even if the Rangers win on Sunday night, and the Habs lose, the Rangers would have to score a hell of a lot of goals (the tie breaker: which team gets more goals during the season) to make the playoffs.

Well, it's history now. The Rangers trounced the Red Wings 5-2 and they even left Ed Giacomin, their goalie, with four minutes left in the game in an effort to get more goals. This is an afternoon game, so that puts the pressure on the Habs to at least pull out a tie with the Hawks. They do go ahead 1-0 but the Hawks come back and in the second period it's a great goaling duel between Vachon and Eposito as the Hawks are up 3-2. In the third, the roof caves in on the Flying Frenchmen: 4-2, 5-2. The Canadiens have got to score a total of five goals in this game to make the playoffs now. It doesn't matter if they lose (they're tied in points with Rangers, but the Rangers have four more goals now), they've got to get 5 and they'll beat Rangers by 1. With 8 minutes left in the game, Claude Ruel, who has not lost in his life, derricks Vachon in favour of an extra attacker. The net is wide open, but maybe the Habs can get those goals. A wild hope! The Canadiens hardly get a shot on the Hawks—those Hawks are really flying!—and Chicago jumps five goals into the empty net. Final score: Chicago 10 - Montreal 2. The worst beating a Montreal team has ever had in recent memory (particularly in a key game). A humiliation. John Ferguson is disgusted (after all, they could've lost cleanly: 5-2 is no humiliation). He'll never forget it, he says. Beliveau just shakes his head. The league is upset and sportswriters call it a mockery. Ruel and Pollock fume and a blizzard hurls somewhere behind them or above them or somewhere....

But that's hockey for you. Anything can happen. That's what makes the game the great attraction that it is....

Win or lose, Beliveau is on top.

Photo: David Blair



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THE VILLAGE VOICE



BE THE FIRST ON YOUR BLOCK TO DISCOVER CAT STEVENS

To the knowledge of us at this record company, precisely one of you out there has discovered Cat Stevens' exceptional **MONA BONE JAKON** album at the time of this writing.

Fortunately (for purposes of this ad), but scarcely surprisingly, that one of you (who happened to be **LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS** contributor Bill Yaryan) was mightily impressed and wrote the following, among specific remarks:

Thirty seconds into the first cut, "Lady d'Arbanville," and I knew I had a winner, a record that could transport me away from the shit going down into a world where I felt comfortable and at home... Stevens' voice is similar to that of the Incredible String Band's Mike Heron. It has the huskiness of too many cigarettes and projects a basketful of emotions... Steve Winwood with his Traffic took the British folk tradition one step further than it had been taken by such Ewan MacColl legacies as Pentangle, Fairport Convention, and the Waterboys. Both Dave Mason and Cat Stevens follow Winwood's lead. Their style is a school all its own... Only in the best science fiction and fantasy can a whole world be created (or, better yet, reflected) in your brain. And only a few artists can build castles in the air with their music. Cat Stevens is one of them.

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A new album from A&M Records

YUMMY, YUMMY, YUMMY

by MALCOLM STONE

The french fried potato is a good reason to be in Quebec.

Not the skinny primthings served up in "French" restaurants, or the frozen WASP-caterina creations, but the fleshy funky hand-out potatoes that are the pride of countless corner stores and highway outlets. Follow your nose in small towns and you may even come across the original chip wagon—trailer temple to the judicious use of grease.

Most downtown Montreal places still don't bother to take the trouble (although Oliver's on Crescent Street was trying for a while). A good many people are settling for Canadian-content at tables where the vinegar sprinkler is unheard of.

The best french fries in Montreal, if not in North America, are to be found in the middle of St. Lawrence Boulevard on the west side between St. Catherine and Dorchester; on most days Frites Dorées is the best of the lot. 15c buys a brimming carton of what the locals seem to call "pet-sauques." Always delicious, these thick beauties vary only with the potato seasons and depending on who is at the controls. They are the only potatoes worth playing tricks with, being equally lousy plain, with salt and vinegar, just with salt, and even cold. Definitely worth standing for. SVP Payer Quand Sers! marks other pet-sauques on the strip, none bad, but only Frites Dorées comes by

Appointment—chosen to cater a magnificent reception for the premiere of a Charlebois flick.

Frites Dorées also serves 20c hotdogs with a variety of garnishes, the mustard and cabbage combination being the most popular. While many friends vouch for this bargain, I have yet to shake the feeling that 20c most stands a very good chance of damaging the stomach. To each his wretched bougeois: hang-up. Hamburgers are 35c, cheeseburgers 45c, but but neither is what you're there for.

The place is a front for Silver Amusements; ask for a tily with your refreshments and make it to the back where the smell changes to the nostalgia of what once was a thriving penny arcade. One of the few remaining challenges for the sportsman is the bank of time claw machines. These are refilled with prizes daily at 8:30 a.m. If you have aspirations, it pays to watch the pros plucking things out starting at around 11:30 in the morning to get a feel for what is possible. Generally, cigarettes are quite easy if properly placed. The silver horse (the glory prize—available in the Montreal area only through the machine) is possible but difficult and will take many dimes to drag into the basket; it often pays to at least budge the damn horse to free some cigarettes and watches. There are also flying saucer guns, the Wonderful Camera, Hall of Fame bow ties, cigars and The French Look line of jewelry, the real China sends harmonicas and a well-

made tiny razor in a kit that blinks local scenes. Avoid the newer models which are all show and little grip. Host Monsieur Gaston will give you change, compassion and the odd bit of advice.

A recent hit at Silver's is the Speedway racing machine offering a thrilling minute of simulated speed driving, passing and crashing complete with sounds of acceleration and accidents for 25c, and a Fantastic Motorcycle Racing Thrills number (newer models of which have an air current blowing on the player)—same as Speedway but with motorcycle sounds and handle bars. Lately the place has a policy of stocking some of Chicago's newest—on a busy night animals and planes groan into the street as they are picked off by rented guns.

Also stacked at Silver's are some of the oldest fortune-telling, test of strength, and peep show machines in the country.

But the guts of true adrenalin palace have long ago been carted away. Pinball machines remain illegal in the city, perhaps a hang-over of the mayor's vice-squad days. Some of Gottlieb's, Williams, and Bally's finest (still called "nickel-suckers" by the morality squad) are gaining fresh bursts of speed in the more tolerant countryside, as well as in select private homes. Reports are in that Fipppers Libres du Québec are making strides in Pointe Calumet and Trout Lake. Find them and you will probably find another great batch of french fries.

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Robert & Tony

Godard.

by ELIZABETH WAJNBERG

Everybody talks. Nobody does anything. Zabriskie Point. Prologue. Easy Rider. How they all love hating hip plastic beautiful America. Guilt for being 20th century, for liking flashing taillights when there's Vietnam. Here's another Coke bottle for you. Zap. Antonioni makes a film about youth-drugs-sex-violence and comes off comy. The characters are in there discussing world problems. You thank God for another gorgeous taillight.

Today movies have to put down Today. The new heavy dumb way of thinking betrays both the beauty of youth and the tragedy of war. Look, they say, we're not just young and hip, we're concerned, too. Golden Boy in Zabriskie Point looks so sexy dodging cops on campus. And he didn't really shoot the cop although he wanted to. The oldest Hollywood cop-out. Good intentions and innocent too. Same credibility gap with the hippie couple in Prologue watching Vietnam film clips. They're all so righteously indignant. There's something incongruous, something sick about using suffering that wholesomely. Earnest young couples justifying their lifestyle.

This phony earnestness makes clichés out of the classic "now" situations. Because they are classic, yet these filmmakers always pretend to have just made an objective discovery. What do you know, there's the Generation Gap, there's US versus the pigs, there's US smoking dope. Nothing dates so quickly as Antonioni's sex-drugs-violence saga. The characters agonize over world

problems and you thank God for their tight jeans and the car radio.

Godard doesn't make any excuses. What he does is blatantly set up the cliché, no story, no pretense. The political rap, the interview, the recording session. You want what's happening—the Rolling Stones, the Maoist clique, Mr. Mod Pants spouting leftist rhetoric. You get it and you get it clean and concentrated in tableaux. "Sympathy For The Devil" isn't about it. It's in it.

He's cool, as cool as the Stones; no hysterical close-ups of Mick Jagger's lips, no God-what-a-decadent-society-we-live-in salvo, just smooth easy teasing pans giving you the whole scene. You don't need a whole narrative to get you into a parking lot with Black Panthers or into a recording studio with the Stones. You know why they're there.

Different takes on different days, the rhythm of the film admitting that you shoot a film in sequences, in segments.

Godard paints it black. He more honestly sets up the cliché and makes it so blatant that you begin to ignore it and get something more, something absurd and at the same time exhilarating. You get it until you're sick of it. He doesn't claim to get the Vietnam tragedy down and so he doesn't end up comy. He gives us what Vietnam really is to us—slogans & ketchup.

The final recorded version of "Sympathy for The Devil" comes on—cut from the Stones on the studio floor to the guerilla girl with the camera, one black and one red flag swinging on a crane. High on the 20th century.



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